

# Physical Environment

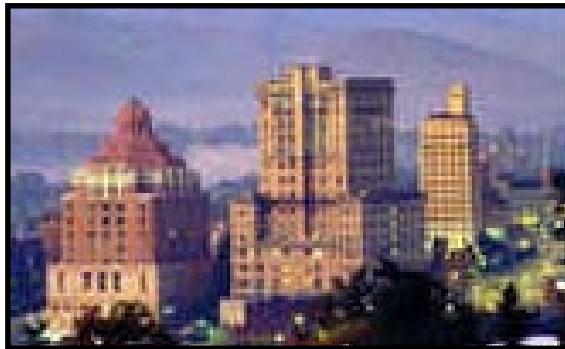
"Asheville is oft times illustrated and promoted in beautiful photographs from the outside looking in-with the Downtown nestled in a basin of lush mountain scenery. By developing the garden city concept in Asheville, our city would be just as beautiful from the inside looking out."

*Bob Carr, Downtown Commission, 1986-1990*

## Land Use/Pattern of Development

Two qualities that distinguish Asheville's Downtown from other areas of the City are its diversity of use and its com-

compact form. A broad range of uses and attractions draw people Downtown for a variety of purposes, creating a rich social environment and a profitable business setting. The compactness with which Downtown has developed promotes pedestrian movement and creates a critical mass of activity. As the Center City grows, it is important that new development reinforces and strengthens these fundamental qualities.



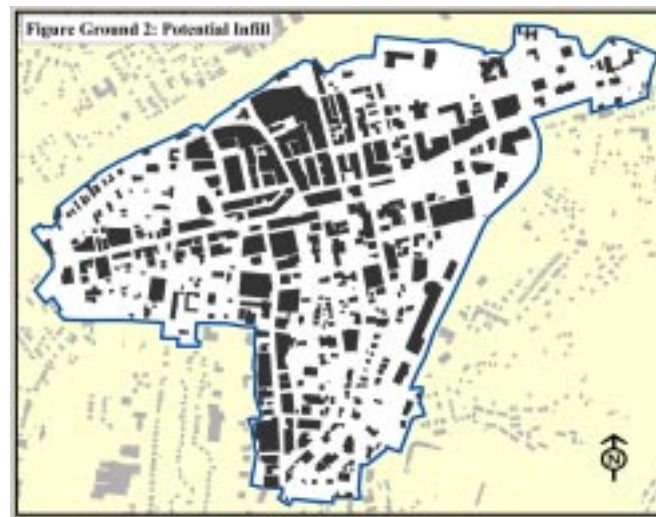
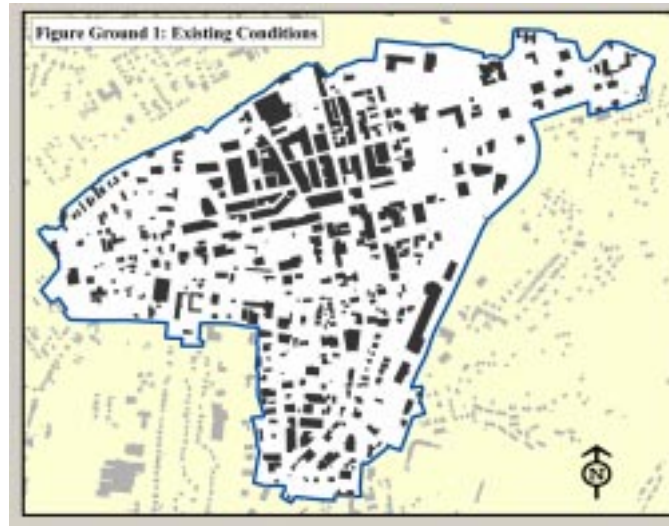
*Downtown Asheville*

**Diversity of Use:** Downtown as a whole should be a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood, housing a wide array of office, retail, residential, entertainment, cultural, and civic uses. The Downtown core should provide the widest range of uses, clearly establishing it as the community's central place. Although the objective is to provide as broad a range of uses as possible, even within individual buildings, the street level spaces throughout the Downtown core should emphasize retail or similar uses that stimulate and complement pedestrian activity. This emphasis on the street-level pedestrian experience is also important within the key corridors that lead into the core.

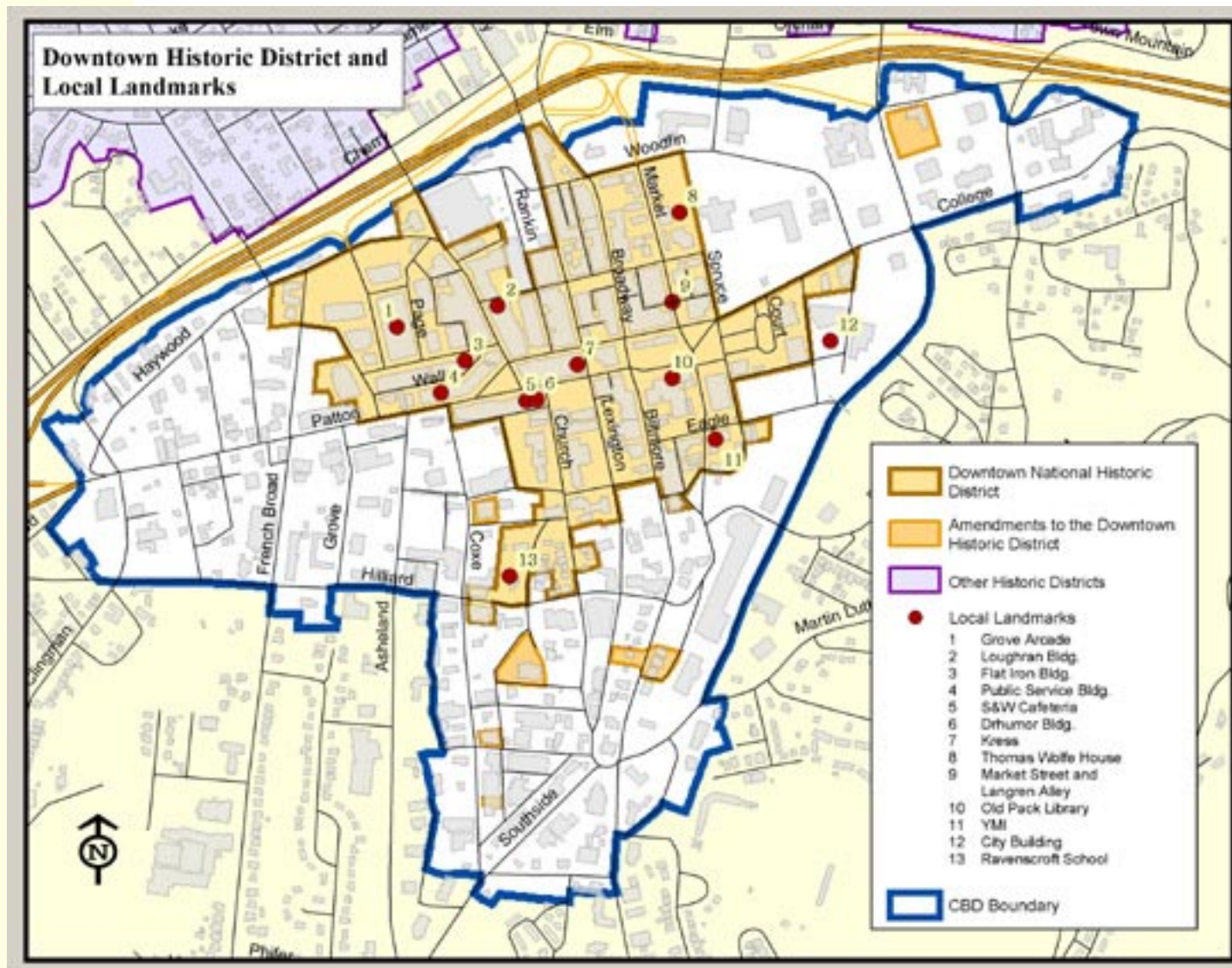
Outside the Downtown core and key entrance corridors, a narrower range of uses can occur. In fact, individual uses should even dominate in certain areas such as the civic district at the eastern end of Downtown and the area west of French Broad Avenue, which should have a high residential concentration. However, even these areas should contain multiple, complementary uses and should be strongly linked to the core. The area south of Hilliard Avenue is expected to develop rapidly over the next decade. A high concentration of high-tech,

medical and residential uses should be encouraged in this area.

**Compactness of Form:** The development pattern in the Downtown area should be compact and walkable, with a tight physical structure that concentrates uses rather than spreading activity thinly over a larger area. Downtown's spatial arrangement of buildings, streets and public spaces should provide a legible framework that helps visitors understand how Downtown is organized. The continuity of buildings framing the street helps to create a coherent urban fabric and should not be interrupted by surface parking lots, vacant properties, or large building setbacks. The density of development should be highest in the Downtown core. Therefore, a first priority should be to develop infill buildings that fill gaps and reinforce the existing urban fabric. While the core is a good example of compact form, it breaks down very quickly outside of the core. The corridors leading into the Downtown core should be developed with a similar density of development and uses that are complimentary to adjacent residential neighborhoods. Redevelopment in these areas should also receive high priority.



*These figure-ground maps illustrate Downtown's existing development pattern, with a compact and walkable core but less organized peripheral and gateway areas (top), and Downtown's future development pattern with new buildings that expand the vibrant downtown core (bottom).*





## Design & Appearance

**Historic Preservation:** Downtown Asheville is one of the largest and best-preserved examples of an early twentieth century American city. The National Register of Historic Places has designated most of the Downtown core as a National Register Historic District. This designation is an honor and a tribute to both the quantity and the quality of Downtown Asheville's historic architecture. A number of downtown buildings, including the City Building, the Kress building, and the Grove Arcade, have received special status as Local and/or National Register Historic Landmarks. (see Map on preceding page).

Downtown's wealth of architecturally significant historic buildings has played a key role in its revitalization. Unlike many cities, which demolished most of their historic buildings, Asheville's historic fabric has remained largely intact. Although many of the businesses and much of the vitality left Downtown by the 1980s, the historic buildings that give Downtown its wonderful character and strong identity remained in place. These buildings, and their collective contribution to the special

character of Downtown, set the stage for revitalization and presented opportunities for visionary entrepreneurs.

Preserving historic structures can be a challenge for investors and developers due to the high costs associated with rehabilitation. While Federal and State historic tax credits aid in the rehabilitation of historic structures, there is a need to provide additional financial incentives and technical assistance as well. The City of Asheville has participated in a rehabilitation code pilot program, based on the New Jersey rehabilitation code. The code is



*Historic Preservation of structures such as the Thomas Wolfe House has contributed to the revitalization of Downtown Asheville.*



likely to benefit developers by making it easier to make changes to existing buildings, perhaps also reducing costs associated with rehabilitating older structures.



Historic preservation will continue to play a major role in making Downtown a distinctive and vital place for its citizens, businesses, and visitors. Ongoing preservation of Downtown's cultural and architectural heritage not only promotes community pride, but makes economic sense as well. In addition to bolstering tourism and business attraction to the area, preservation helps to increase the City and County tax base by encouraging property re-investment over demolition. Restoration of historic buildings is particularly significant in Downtown Asheville due to geographical constraints, limited availability of developable land, and its status as a tourist destination. If the Center City is to reach its full potential, we must continue to safeguard the architectural legacy of Downtown Asheville.



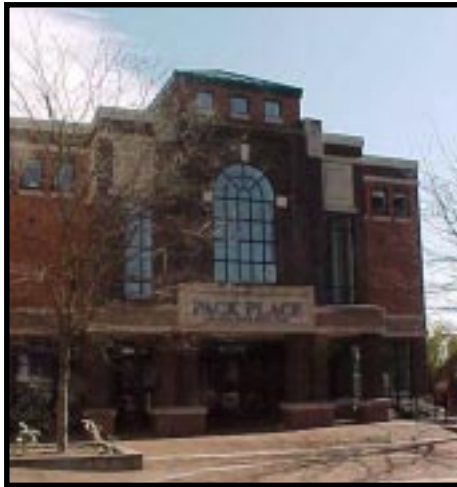
**New Construction:** The majority of Downtown's historic buildings have been renovated to house new uses. Continued Downtown growth therefore will require the construction of new buildings. The majority of new construction in the Downtown core will be infill development. Infill buildings are desirable in that they fill gaps in the urban fabric and provide opportunities for continued economic development. Infill buildings must be sensitively designed, however, to reinforce and build upon the architectural and historic character of Downtown. The objective is not for new buildings to mimic historic designs or to apply a period architectural style to a new building. Rather, new infill buildings should respect the existing historic context by incorporating certain basic design elements into a contemporary architectural expression. The following principles should be used as guidelines in the design of infill buildings:

1. New buildings should follow established building setbacks within the block, usually at the sidewalk edge, to reinforce the street edge and enhance pedestrian continuity.
2. The scale and massing of infill buildings should be compatible with existing build-

ings within the block. The building mass should be broken into increments that correspond to the scale and massing of existing buildings within the block.

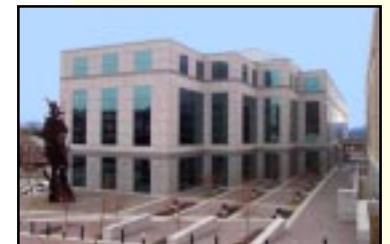
3. The building's street level façade and primary entrance should be oriented toward the street and should be designed to add interest and variety to the pedestrian experience.
4. Building fenestration, including the location of doors and windows, should be consistent with the context of surrounding buildings and the function of the street on which the building is located.

*The Pack Place Building illustrates how new construction can complement the existing architectural and historic character of Downtown.*



Not all new Downtown construction has to incorporate contextual design. Certain buildings, because of their location, context, or use will be considered “monumental” buildings. Monumental buildings require less attention to context and therefore can be designed to establish a baseline for a new context. Monumental buildings are often appropriate at gateway entrances to Downtown. It is important that monumental buildings be designed to contribute to the existing urban fabric and that the quality of their architecture is commensurate with their prominence in location or use.

**Public Realm:** The careful, deliberate design of the various elements that make up the public realm is just as important as the design and preservation of buildings. In fact, the measure of Downtown's success as a place (and as a market) is the quality of the pedestrian experience and the likelihood that people will linger Downtown, walking from place to place. Therefore, providing a pleasant, diverse and interesting pedestrian environment should be the highest urban design priority.







**Streetscape:** Streetscaping details, including streetlights, sidewalk materials, tree grates, street furniture, and signage, enhance the pedestrian experience and give Downtown a strong sense of place. Over the past fifteen years, the City has made vast improvements in the quality of Downtown streetscapes. The City has installed benches, trash receptacles, Old Asheville-style streetlights, tree grates, and bike racks. Numerous sidewalk improvements have also been made.

*Examples of  
Downtown  
streetscape elements.*

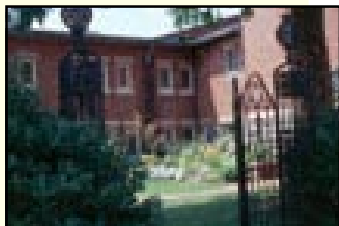


The continued installation of streetscape elements is vital to Downtown's ongoing development and revitalization. With limited funding, the completion of Downtown streetscape enhancements must be accomplished incrementally. It is important, therefore, that priorities are developed to guide the phasing of streetscape projects. The first priority should be to fill gaps within the Downtown core that sever pedestrian linkages. Streetscape extensions made in conjunction with private development projects or where extensions are likely to stimulate desirable private investment should also be a high priority. Another high priority location is along gateway corridors, where the addition of streetscape elements can establish a strong identity and sense of place for Downtown.

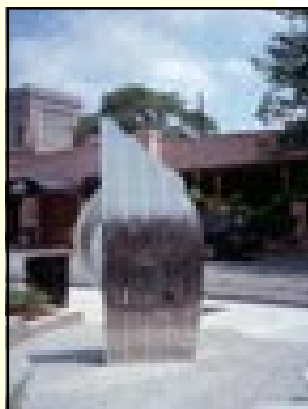
The consistent and repeated use of streetscape elements establishes a Downtown "vocabulary" that reinforces Downtown's organizing structure and helps to orient visitors. One of Downtown Asheville's many charms is its eclectic nature and distinct sub-districts that have developed—each with its







own flavor and special character. It is important that these sub-districts project a distinctive identity. This can be achieved through variations in streetscape details, thereby establishing a “sub-vocabulary” that is unique to each district. At the same time, it is important that the primary elements that comprise Downtown’s overall “vocabulary” (consistent design and placement of streetlights and furnishings for example) be extended into each sub-district so that they are clearly recognized as part of the larger Downtown neighborhood.



*Urban Trail Station 21, “On The Move”.*

**Landscaping:** Downtown landscaping serves to soften and humanize the urban environment and can provide areas of refuge from the summer heat. Street trees provide an additional unifying element to the streetscape and should be extended wherever possible. Additionally, plantings can beautify pockets of underutilized Downtown space.

**Public Art:** Downtown Asheville is blessed with an abundance of public art. The Asheville Urban Trail, for example, offers 30 “stations” that describe the rich history of the City. New public art can help to reinforce

Downtown’s unique identity and humanize the environment. The design of even the most utilitarian components of the public realm, such as tree grates, manhole covers, and bus shelters should be designed as artistic pieces that contribute to Asheville’s rich arts heritage.

**Signage:** Public signage also plays a key role in establishing visual continuity Downtown. All Downtown signage should be carefully coordinated and integrated into a comprehensive “wayfinding” program (see Park Once and



*Urban Trail Station 13, “Appalachian Stage”.*

Wayfinding on page 84).

### Public Spaces/Facilities

**Parks & Open Space:** Parks and other public spaces are essential ingredients to a livable Downtown. These spaces provide opportunities for social interaction and invite participation and enjoyment in the vitality and life of the city. Well-placed and designed open spaces contribute greatly to the identity of Downtown and can serve as powerful catalysts for private investment and residential development.

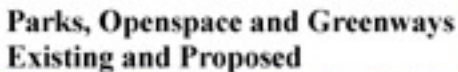
Currently, Downtown Asheville is very limited in the amount and quality of parks and open space. Fortunately, that is beginning to change. Pritchard Park, which was renovated and reopened in the summer of 2001, has proven to be a tremendous asset that is widely used for a variety of activities—including a highly successful series of outdoor movies. The redesign of Pritchard Park has contributed to a flurry of redevelopment on adjacent College Street, confirming the value of quality public spaces as economic catalysts.

The Pack Square Renaissance project, which

involves the redesign of both Pack Square and City-County Plaza, is an exciting project with enormous potential to provide a world class public space in the traditional heart of Downtown Asheville. In addition to serving as a wonderful gathering space and the “living room” of the community, the redesign of this prominent public space is expected to stimulate a great deal of private investment in the Downtown area. The realization of the Pack Square Renaissance project should be an extremely high priority for City and County



*Conceptual drawing of the Pack Square Renaissance project. The redesign will be a great amenity for Downtown residents and visitors alike.*





government and the community at large. As Downtown continues to develop, it is critical that new parks and other public spaces are planned and constructed as integral components of the downtown development fabric. The following principles should be used in locating new parks and public spaces:

- The series of open spaces along the Patton Avenue spine, which includes (from east to west) City-County Plaza, Pack Square, and Pritchard Park, should be extended westward to include at least two new major public spaces. A large public space should be planned and developed at the western entrance to Downtown to provide a prominent, identity-building gateway into Down-



*Residents and visitors enjoy an outdoor event at the recently renovated Pritchard Park.*

town. This public space should be designed to complement and stimulate a large private development project at this key gateway location.

- The Sister Cities Park and other properties owned by the City on Beaucatcher Mountain should be developed as called for in the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan. These parks, with their extraordinary views of Downtown and the surrounding mountains, can be extremely valuable recreational and cultural amenities. Few cities are blessed with Asheville's combination of topography and scenic beauty that present the opportunity to locate mountaintop parks within walking distance of a vibrant, culturally rich Downtown.
- Smaller parks and public spaces should be provided in each sub-district of Downtown. These spaces can strengthen the unique sense of place found in individual districts and improve overall Downtown



*Pocket park across from the Kress Building.*

"Both downtown businesses and city governments are ultimately concerned with public space - the streets, sidewalks, parks and plazas - for it is here that the quality of life in a city is often measured. This is the stage where both public and private investments are set."

*From Managing Downtown Public Spaces  
Project for Public Spaces, Inc.*

livability.

- Parks and open spaces should be well linked with each other and with Downtown's overall pedestrian network.

- Opportunities also exist throughout

Downtown for the creation of small "pocket parks" in under-utilized areas. Pocket parks, which can be located on public or private property, are small outdoor spaces ranging in size from a large street corner to a small courtyard. Pocket parks provide similar benefits as larger parks, but can be easily integrated into the existing Downtown fabric. These spaces provide interest to pedestrians, offer areas for passive enjoyment, and serve to soften and beautify the urban landscape. These spaces, whether located on public or private property, should be open to the public and well maintained.

Finally, there is an opportunity to improve the quality of a number of existing Downtown parks and open spaces. Examples include the

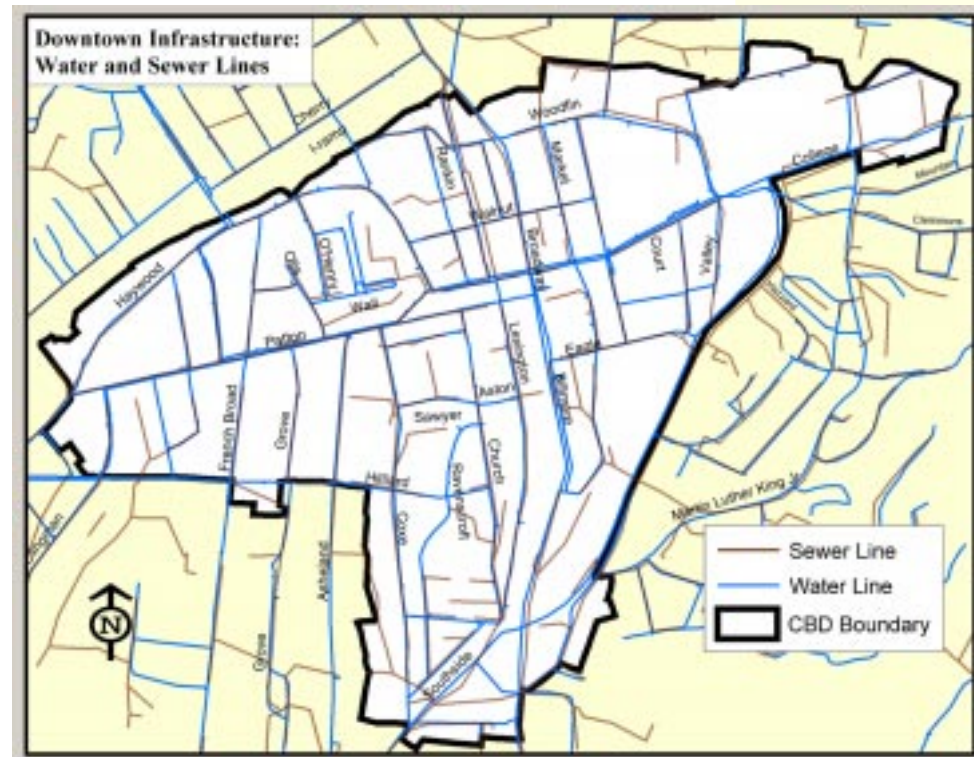


*Courtyard along Lexington Avenue (above); New York City Pocket Park (below).*

already mentioned Pack Square/City-County Plaza, Aston Park, Martin Luther King Park, Stephens Lee Recreation Center, and the Triangle Park in the Eagle-Market Streets area.

**Infrastructure:** Adequate infrastructure is fundamental to sustaining a high level of livability Downtown and to supporting the success of Downtown businesses. The City must continually ensure that public infrastructure capacities, including water, sewer, stormwater and fiber optic lines, are available and capable of absorbing future Downtown growth. Early planning and timely investments in Downtown infrastructure improvements are key to retaining jobs and residents and in attracting new industry, including information technology-related businesses.

The Downtown area is fortunate to have plentiful high-speed Internet connections in place, which support information technology-related businesses, in keeping with Downtown economic goals. According to the *Asheville Citizen Times* (April 28, 2002), “wireless technology is turning one of the oldest buildings into one of the most technologically advanced.” The owners of the Flat Iron building



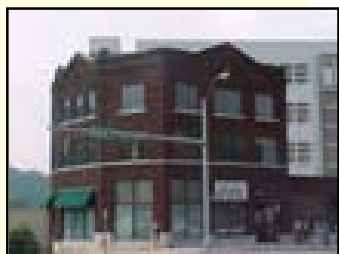




are providing a wireless fidelity zone throughout the historic structure, allowing Internet subscribers access without having to be being plugged into a wall.



It cannot be over emphasized that infrastructure is the nuts and bolts of successful Downtown development. In order to achieve the community's overall vision for Downtown Asheville, adequate infrastructure must be in place to provide for the needs of current users and to accommodate future Downtown growth. The development of a comprehensive Infrastructure Improvements Plan, which identifies necessary upgrades and prioritizes improvements, will help to ensure that Downtown infrastructure supports continued economic growth. (see Map on page 59).



**Government Complex:** City and County governmental services play a major role in the way Downtown functions. The presence of these services draws people Downtown, provides jobs, and reinforces Downtown's status as the center of the region. Most local governmental functions are



housed within or immediately adjacent to the City Building and the County Courthouse. However, an increasing number of these functions have been scattered throughout the Downtown area in recent years. It is important to consolidate as many governmental services as possible in the existing City-County “campus” area. Centralizing these functions will have a number of benefits including:

- Increasing the efficiency with which local government operates.
- Increasing the quality of customer service.
- Placing public sector properties that are better suited for private development into private ownership and under appropriate private development.

### Sub-Districts

Downtown Asheville is comprised of a number of informal sub-districts, each with their own flavor and unique sense of place. These Downtown neighborhoods embody special qualities of place, architecture, history, culture, use, and location. The Battery Hill District, Lexington Park, Biltmore Avenue, and the Eagle/Market Streets area are examples of existing Down-

town sub-districts. Together, these diverse and visually rich neighborhoods provide variety and interest to the Downtown landscape and help to distinguish Downtown as a unique location within the region.

The presence of sub-districts within the larger Downtown neighborhood is a major strength of Downtown Asheville. The tangible qualities and distinguishing characteristics of sub-districts can be identified, quantified, planned, marketed, and capitalized upon to the overall benefit of Downtown. The uniqueness of Downtown’s sub-districts can be strengthened and accentuated by incorporating variations in streetscape details, utilizing special signage, and encouraging specific land uses and complementary design in new buildings. Additionally, the strong identity and sense of place that sub-districts provide can serve to attract visitors and help orient them in the Downtown landscape.

The Wayfinding Program recommended in this Plan will play a key role in defining, marketing, and accentuating the character of Downtown sub-districts. Working with the Downtown community to identify existing



*Existing conditions of gateway corridor in Chattanooga leading into downtown (above). Example of how gateway corridor improvements announce one's arrival into Downtown (below).*



and proposed sub-districts, define their character, and delineate their boundaries should be a major step in the process of developing a Wayfinding Program for Downtown Asheville (see Wayfinding on page 84).

### Gateways

The sequence of views leading into Downtown determines a visitor's first impressions of the Center City. Gateway corridors, the streets that lead into Downtown, establish an indelible image, either positive or negative, in the mind of a visitor. Therefore, the visual quality of our gateway corridors is as important as the visual quality of the Downtown core. Gateway corridors should be designed and developed in such a way that they reward visitors with a sense of arrival and act as a positive, welcoming introduction into Downtown.

Because of its topography and the beauty of its Downtown architecture, Asheville has unique potential for the development of spectacular gateway entrances into Downtown. Entering the City from the west involves crossing over the potentially scenic French Broad River. As one enters the City from the east, the elevated vantage point provides stunning views into Downtown and the mountains beyond. The approaches from the north and south provide views of Downtown perched atop a hill.



*Potential redesign of Patton/Clingman gateway intersection.*





That said, much needs to be done to improve all of the gateway corridors leading into Downtown. In general, the development patterns in the major gateway corridors must change as properties are redeveloped. An urban pattern, with multi-story mixed use buildings edging the street should be encouraged over the existing suburban pattern typified by single-story buildings set far back from the street with large areas of parking in front. Attention should be paid to streetscape and appearance issues in all gateway corridors as a means to strengthen their connection to the Downtown core.

In addition to improving the gateway corridors that lead into Downtown, opportunities exist to mark the primary points of entry into Downtown with public art, landscaping, or signage to clearly announce one's arrival into the Center City.

## Vision, Goals, and Strategies

**Vision:** Downtown Asheville will build upon its spectacular physical environment, clearly establishing it as a showpiece of the region. Improved gateway entrances will herald the approach into a visually rewarding Center City. Downtown's compact development pattern, woven of exceptional architecture, intimate streetscapes, and quality open spaces, will set the stage for increased private investment and will provide visitors with an indelible image of a place to which they long to return.

### **Goal I: Reinforce Downtown's mixed-use and compact pattern of development.**

#### **Strategies:**

1. Encourage and promote infill development to fill existing gaps in the Downtown core.
2. Identify under-utilized parcels of land along key entrance corridors and encourage their development/redevelopment.
3. Foster retail or other uses at street level to stimulate pedestrian activity.

- a. Educate property owners, managers, and realtors on the benefits of active street level uses.
- b. Require active uses on the first floor of any development that receives public funding.

### **Goal II: Continue to preserve and enhance Downtown's wealth of historic buildings.**

#### **Strategies:**

1. Pursue the creation of additional financial incentives for property owners to rehabilitate historic buildings, such as low interest loans and/or façade improvement programs.
2. Promote greater awareness of technical assistance available regarding preservation techniques.
3. Educate the community and developers regarding the social and economic benefits of preserving historic structures.
4. Identify key historic properties not yet designated as local historic landmarks and encourage their designation as such.





5. Protect the historic fabric through infill development that is sensitive to the character of older buildings.

**Goal III: Ensure a high level of architectural quality in new buildings (new buildings should respect the historic context of Downtown and contribute to its unique sense of place but should be designed to reflect the period in which they are built).**

**Strategies:**

1. Educate property owners and developers about the importance of high quality, compatible design.
2. Establish a dialogue with architects/developers early in the design process to foster greater public/private collaboration in new development projects.
3. Amend the Central Business District (CBD) zoning to include additional development standards that address siting, scale, massing, materials, and other elements that are



fundamental to compatible new construction. A height limit should be established to prevent new construction that is out of scale with the existing pattern of development.

4. Revise the Downtown Design Review Guidelines, especially with respect to new construction, to reflect the goal of encouraging contextual yet contemporary design of new structures.
5. Expand the Downtown Design Review boundaries to incorporate the expanded Central Business District boundaries with the adjacent gateway corridors.
6. Investigate the creation of economic and development incentives to ensure better quality design in Downtown.

**Goal IV: Provide a pedestrian environment that is pleasant, visually interesting, and welcoming to visitors.**

**Strategies:**

1. Establish a committee to assist the City in



addressing streetscape and other public realm design issues.

- a. Establish an overall policy for Downtown streetscapes.
  - b. Update the Streetscape Plan. The plan should include an overall Downtown “vocabulary” of streetscape elements while encouraging variations in sub-districts to reinforce their unique qualities and sense of place.
  - c. Establish a streamlined process for the review of streetscape projects.
2. In accordance with the revised Streetscape Plan and consistent with the streetscape policies, improve existing streetscapes and extend streetscape elements throughout Downtown.
  3. Seek opportunities to improve existing Downtown landscaping and to provide new landscaping where appropriate.
  4. Seek opportunities to integrate public art into streetscaping elements such as bus shelters, kiosks, and tree grates.
  5. Create a consistent, attractive, and user-

friendly downtown signage program (see Wayfinding on page 84).

6. Assure strong communication and coordination between the various groups having an interest in the appearance of the public realm.
7. Provide and maintain strategically located public restrooms.

**Goal V: Create a network of well-designed parks and open spaces to serve the recreational and urban amenity needs of an increasingly vibrant Downtown.**

**Strategies:**

1. Improve and redevelop existing parks and public open spaces and continue a high level of maintenance.
2. Complete the Pack Square Renaissance Project.
  - a. Continue to educate the public regarding its historical and symbolic significance and the enormous benefits its redesign will offer the community.





- b. Facilitate fundraising necessary to achieve project construction.
    - c. Continue the strong partnership and effective cooperation between the Pack Square Conservancy, City and County governments, and stakeholder groups.
    - d. Ensure that infrastructure changes necessary to project completion are made.
  - 3. Develop new parks and other public spaces in and adjacent to Downtown. Opportunities that should be actively pursued include:
    - Locations along the Patton Avenue spine, including a large “gateway” park or plaza at the western end of the corridor. This public space should be designed to complement and stimulate a large private development project at this key gateway location
    - The Sister Cities Park and other properties owned by the City on Beaucatcher Mountain. While these locations are outside Downtown, their development will provide a valuable amenity to Downtown residents and visitors, particularly if connected to Downtown by greenway trails.
    - Strategic locations within each Downtown subdistrict.
      - a. Assemble property suitable for the future development of parks and open spaces.
      - b. Encourage open space as a component of large catalytic development projects.
      - c. Utilize a public/private model such as exists in the Pack Square Renaissance Project to aid and accelerate the development of new parks and open spaces.
  - 4. In keeping with a Streetscape Plan, encourage the development of “pocket parks” in under-utilized portions of public and private property.
  - 5. Link the network of parks and open spaces through attractive tree-lined pedestrian streets.
- Goal VI: Maintain existing public art and provide additional pieces at key locations as a means to reinforce Downtown’s unique identity, humanize the environment, and celebrate Asheville’s rich artistic heritage.**
- Strategies:**
- 1. Continue to maintain and promote the

Urban Trail and other existing Downtown public art.

2. Provide new public art at key locations, including gateway entrances into Downtown.
3. Ensure that the placement of public art is well coordinated and consistent with the Streetscape Plan and overall Downtown planning efforts.

**Goal VII: Ensure adequate infrastructure to meet the needs of current users and to accommodate future Downtown growth and development.**

**Strategies:**

1. Work with infrastructure providers to develop a comprehensive Infrastructure Improvements Plan for Downtown.
  - a. Assess existing and future infrastructure needs.
  - b. Identify necessary infrastructure upgrades and prioritize improvements.
  - c. Seek opportunities for public/private partnerships to fund improvements.

2. Improve coordination and communication between City departments and utility providers regarding infrastructure requirements and planned improvements.

**Goal VIII: Consolidate City and County government facilities and services in the existing government complex.**

**Strategies:**

1. Develop a master plan for the government complex area to include the construction of new buildings to house current and future government facilities.
2. Seek opportunities to relocate “satellite” City and County facilities into the government complex area and get public sector properties that are better suited for private development into private ownership and under appropriate development.
3. Maintain the City Development office in a central Downtown location, as it continues to be an integral part of Downtown development and revitalization.





**Goal IX: Capitalize upon the special qualities and unique identity of Downtown “neighborhoods” by establishing formalized Downtown sub-districts.**

**Strategies:**

1. Work with the Downtown community to identify existing and proposed sub-districts, define their character, and delineate their boundaries.
2. Strengthen and accentuate the unique flavor and special qualities of Downtown sub-districts.
  - a. Incorporate variations in streetscape details that reflect the character of each sub-district.
  - b. Encourage appropriate and complimentary land uses and building design in Downtown sub-districts.
3. Incorporate sub-district development and enhancement as a major goal in the development of a Downtown Wayfinding Program.
4. Actively market the strong sense of place that distinct sub-districts provide to Downtown Asheville.

**Goal X: Transform gateways leading into Downtown to provide a positive, welcoming introduction to the Center City.**

**Strategies:**

1. Improve the visual quality of gateway corridors.
  - a. Develop new zoning districts and other tools to ensure that gateway corridors redevelop with an urban pattern of development consisting of well designed, multi-story buildings located close to the street.
  - b. Improve landscaping and extend streetscape elements to provide a strengthened physical and visual connection between gateway corridors and the Downtown core.
  - c. Work toward moving overhead utilities underground.
  - d. Work towards removing inappropriate signage and structures.
2. Accentuate the primary points of entry into Downtown as a means to “announce” one’s arrival into the Center City.
  - a. Utilize public art, landscaping, and/or



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signage to mark the primary points of entry into Downtown.

- b. Integrate gateway signage into a comprehensive “Park Once and Wayfinding” program (see Park Once and Wayfinding on page 84).
- c. Seek opportunities to construct new buildings at key entry locations that are designed to architecturally reinforce one’s sense of arrival in the Center City.